

The Department in Brief

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Department Overview

The Department of Social Services provides a broad range of services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, families, and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living. It administers over 90 legislatively authorized programs and one-third of the state budget. By statute it is the state agency responsible for administering a number of programs under federal legislation, including the Rehabilitation Act, the Food Stamp Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Social Security Act. The department is also designated as a public housing agency for the purpose of administering the Section 8 program under the federal Housing Act.

The department is headed by the Commissioner of Social Services, and there are deputy commissioners for Administration and Programs. There is a regional administrator responsible for each of the three service regions. By statute, there is a statewide advisory council to the Commissioner, and each region must have a regional advisory council.

The agency administers most of its programs through offices located throughout the state. Within the department, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services provides vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals with physical and mental disabilities at 23 offices throughout the state. For the other programs, services are available through 11 offices located in the three regions, with central office support located in Hartford. In addition, many services funded by the agency are available through community based agencies, including the 156 senior centers throughout Connecticut. The agency has outstationed employees at hospitals to expedite Medicaid applications, and funds healthy start sites which can accept applications for Medicaid for pregnant women and young children. Many of the services provided by the department are available via mail or phone call.

There are four entities attached to the department for administrative purposes only. They are the Commission on Aging, The Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the Board of Education services for the Blind, and the Child Day Care Council.